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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 EB-08 OMB-01 AID-05 TRSE-00
SIL-01 LAB-04 COME-00 DOE-11 SOE-02 INT-05 OES-07
STR-07 CEA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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/120 W
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R 131100Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1531
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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EO 11652 NA
TAGS: PINT PGOV VE
SUBJ: PRESIDENT PEREZ PREVIEWS THEMES OF UPCOMING STATE
OF THE NATIONS ADDRESS

SUMMARY. PRESIDENT PEREZ DEFENDED THE ACHIEVEMENT
OF HIS 4-YEAR OLD ADMINISTRATION IN A RECENT INTERVIEW
WITH A NATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE, IDENTIFYING THE THEMES
FOR HIS MARCH 10 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS. STRIKING
A VERY POSITIVE TONE, PEREZ DID ADMIT SOME POLICIES HAD NOT
FARED WELL. THE DEFENSE AND CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY
REGARDED AS THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS TENURE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH A NATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE,
PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ PREVIEWED THE THEMES OF
HIS UPCOMING MARCH 10 ADDRESS TO THE CONGRESS ON THE STATE
OF THE VENEZUELAN NATION AND ON HIS 4-YEAR PERFORMANCE
AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE. ASSERTING THAT MORE THAN HALF HIS
CAMPAIGN PROMISES HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, PEREZ MADE A
VIGOROUS DEFENSE OF HIS ADMINISTRATIO'S RECORD,
STRIKING A STRONG UPBEAT NOTE AND CITING NUMEROUS
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ECONOMIC REFORMS AND INVESTMENTS MADE TO DEVELOP
BASIC INDUSTRY, CREATE JOBS, STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND
IN GENERAL IMPROVE THE LOT OF THE WORKER. HE CITED
SPECIFICALLY CHANGES IN THE LABOR LAW, THE 1974 GENERAL
SALARY INCREASE AND THE GOV FIGURE OF 8 PERCENT ANNUAL
INFLATION TO SUPPORT HIS CASE.

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2. ON THE SUBJECT OF OIL POLICY, PEREZ REPEATED PREVIOUS
GOV STATEMENTS THAT THE RECENT DROP IN PRODUCTION WOULD
NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE BUDGET AND THAT INCREASING
DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY WOULD ENABLE VENEZUELA
TO BETTER DEAL WITH FLUCTUATIONS IN THE INTERNATINAL
OIL MARKET.

3. PEREZ ALSO EMPHASIZED GOV EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THE
FREQUENT BREAKDOWN OF PUBLIC SERVICES, FAMILY PLANNING
TO LOWER THE HIGH BIRTH RATE AND THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION
OF WOMEN IN VENEZUELAN SOCIETY. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION
ON THE SENSITIVE ISSUE OF GOVT CORRUPTION, THE
PRESIDENT CITED A LITANY OF LEGISLATION DESIGNED TO
PROVIDE THE JURIDICAL INSTRUMENTS NECESSARY
TO INSURE AN HONEST AND RESPONSIVE GOVT. ON THE
DARKER SIDE, PEREZ STATED THAT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LAW
ENFORCEMENT AND COMBAT CRIME HAD MET WITH SMALL SUCCESS.

4. EMPHASIZING DEMOCRACY HAD UNDERGONE A "SIGNIFICANT
TEST" DURING HIS TIME IN OFFICE, PEREZ CONCLUDED "THE
BEST ACHIEVEMENT OF MY GOVT, AFTER FIVE YEARS, WILL
HAVE BEEN TO CONSOLIDATE THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN VENEZUELA."

5. COMMENT: THIS INTERVIEW IS SIGNIFICANT IN SEVERAL
RESPECTS. IT MARKS THE FIRST TIME THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ
HAS SYSTEMATICALLY SPOKEN TO A DEFENSE OF HIS DOMESTIC
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POLICIES, WITH ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO FOREIGN POLICY
ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH HOLD LITTLE, IF ANY, INTEREST FOR THE
AVERAGE VOTER. IT ALSO SETS THE STAGE FOR THE LAS YEAR
OF THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION, AND,IN A SENSE, MARKS A
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION IN FAVOR OF AD IN THE CAMPAIGN
WHICH OFFICIALLY BEGINS IN APRIL. PEREZ HAS STEADFASTLY
MAINTAINED, AS HAS THE AD LEADERSHIP, THAT HE WILL NOT
OFFICIALLY CAMPAIGN FOR THE AD CANDIDATE. WHILE HE CANNOT
CONSTITUTIONALLY, HIS DEFENSE OF HIS ADMINISTRATION'S
ACCOMPLISHMENTS SERVES MUCH THE SAME PURPOSE. IT IS NOT
EXPECTED THAT HE WILL ACTIVELY STUMP FOR PINERUA BUT
ALL EXPECT SIMILAR DEFENSES IN THE FUTURE AS THE CAMPAIGN
CHURNS ON. FURTHER, PINERUA HIMSELF--ALTHOUGH NOT
PERZEZ' CHOICE AS THE AD PARTY STANDARDBEARER--MUST HIMSELF
DEFEND PEREZ' RECORD TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY AS HIS
PARTY'S CANDIDATE. THE EMBASSY SURMIZES THAT PEREZ HAS
DECIDED, BOTH FOR THE SAKE OF THE AD CANDIDATE, AND FOR HIS
OWN PLACE IN HISTORY, TO FOCUS ON THOSE MATTERS WHICH TOUCH
THE AVERAGE CITIZE. THUS HIS DEFENSE OF ECONOMIC
PROGRAMS, AND OF THE VERY SYSTEM OF DEMOCRACY ITSELF.
IN THIS REGARD, AD PUBLICITY HAS NOW BEGUN TO FOCUS
ON POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENTS (DAMS, SCHOOLS, INDUSTRIAL

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PROJECTS). ONE AD, FOR EXAMPLE NOW ANSWERS A COPEI
TV AD OF STOCK CRTTICISM BY GIVING A STRONG DEMONSTRATIN
OF "WHERE THE MONEY REALLY WAS SPENT." SHOULD THE
PRESIDENT AND THE AD PARTY CONTINUE IN THIS VEIN, THEY
SHOULD BOOST THE IMAGE OF AD PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
PINERUA.
VAKY

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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 mar 1978
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780377/aaaacmyl.tel
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Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SOPN, VE, (PEREZ, CARLOS ANDRES)
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